

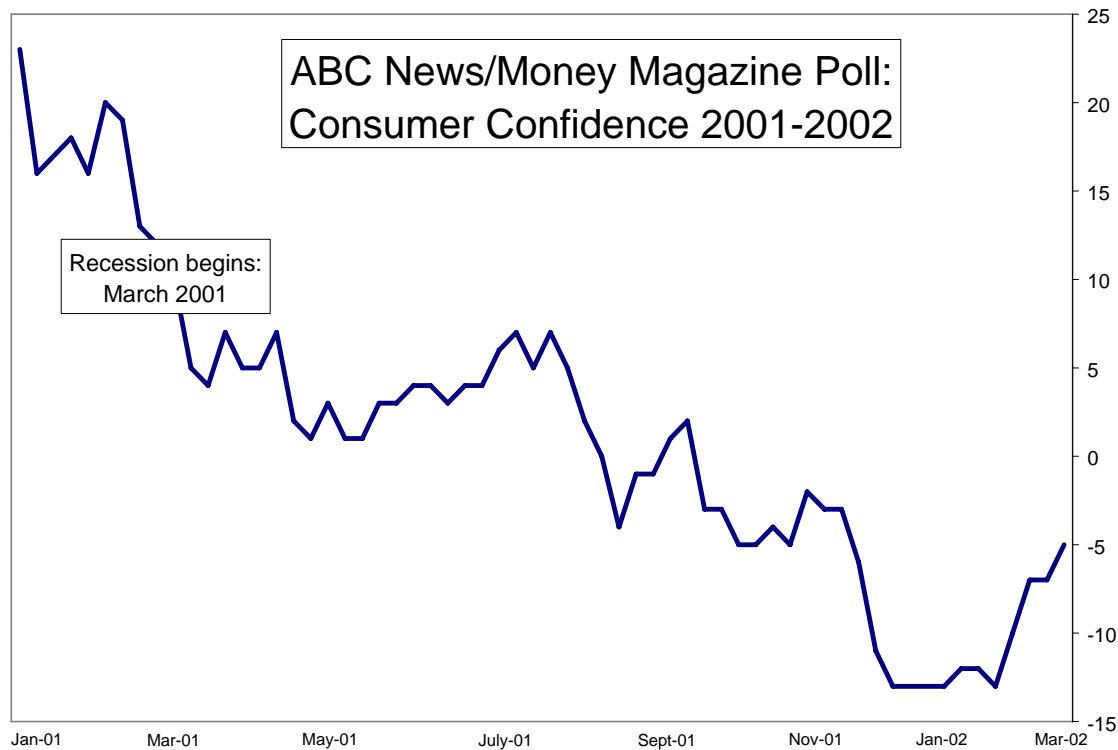
## **Ratings of the Economy Climb to a 5-Month High**

With the economy showing signs of breaking out of recession, public ratings of its health have improved to their best since October.

Forty percent of Americans say the national economy's in good shape, still a minority but up eight points in the last month. Forty-two percent call it a good time to buy things, a measure that's been pretty steady since the beginning of the year. And more, 61 percent, say their own finances are in good shape, up five points since the start of the year.

The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index, based on these gauges, stands at -5 on its scale of +100 to -100, up eight points in the last month from what had been its lowest since the recession began a year ago.

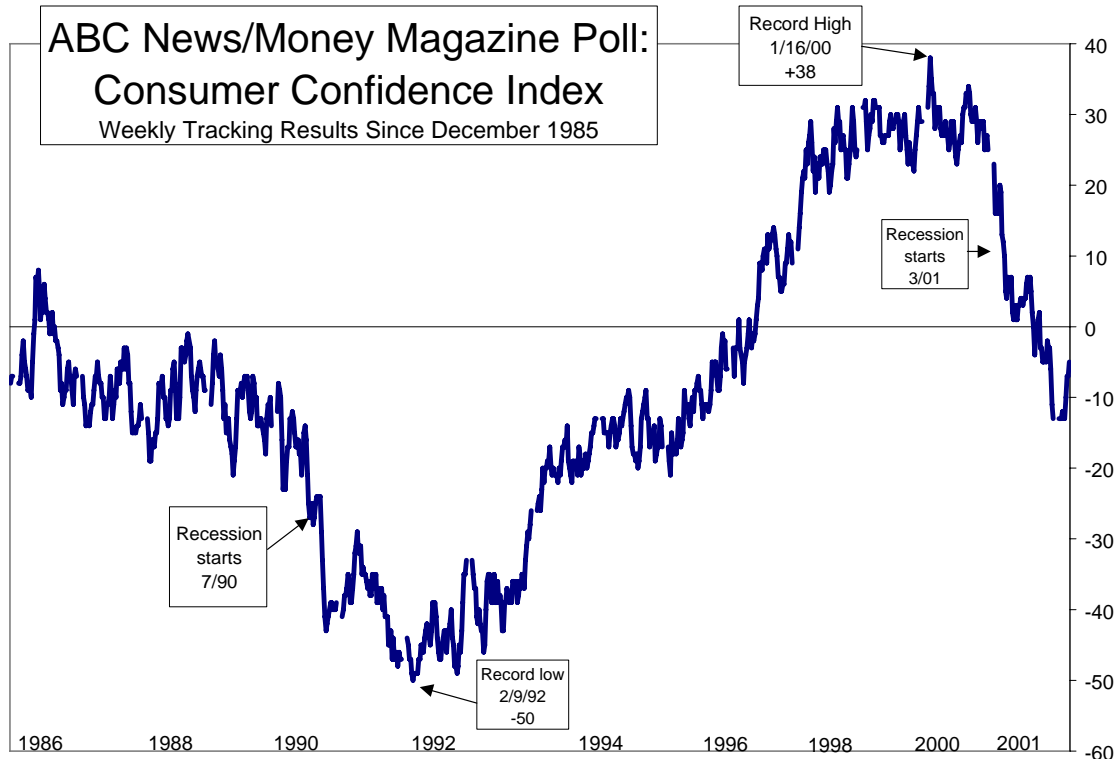
Improving views of the nation's economy are mostly responsible for this turnaround, just as rapidly declining views of the economy were the main reason confidence steadily dropped throughout 2001.



Some economic reports in recent weeks have shown encouraging signs for the economy, leading Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan last week to say recovery was “well under way.”

The increase in consumer confidence from its lowest of this recession may be another sign that the worst is over.

	ABC News/Money Magazine Poll			
Positive ratings of:	3/10/02	2/10/02	1/7/01	16-year average
National economy	40%	32	71	42
Buying climate	42	40	47	39
Personal finances	61	59	66	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-5	-13	+23	-8



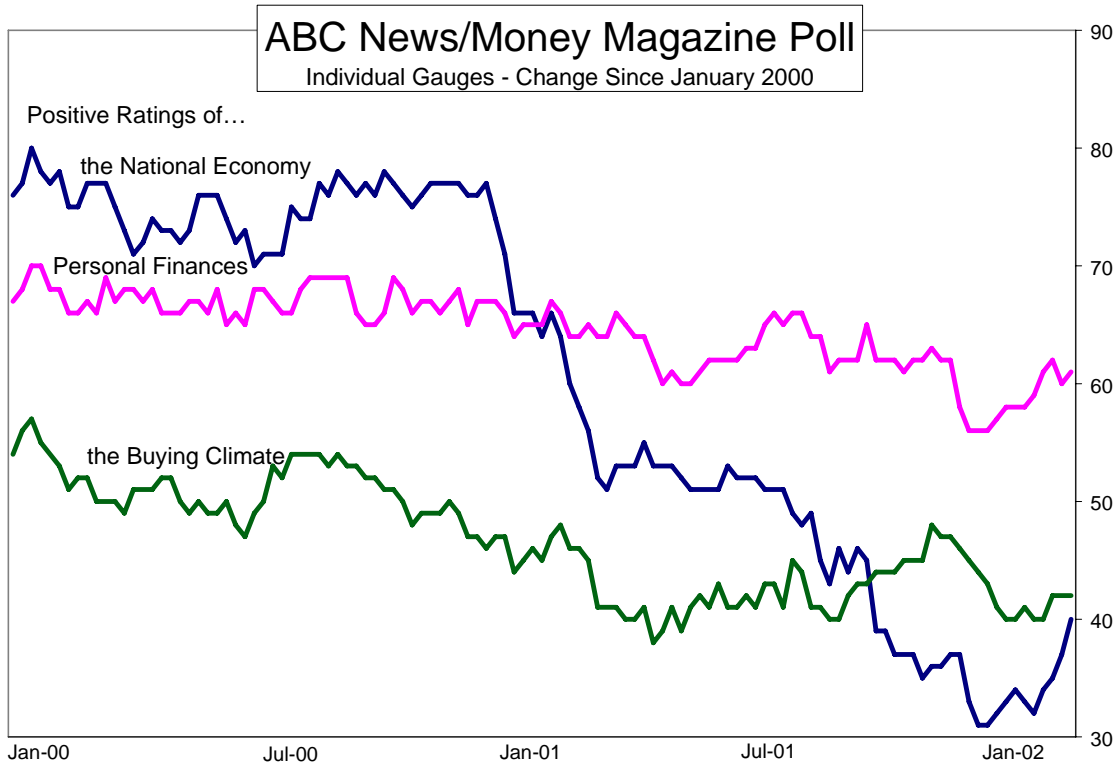
**TREND** – The weekly index was +23 at the beginning of 2001 and dropped throughout the year to a low of –13 at year-end. It stayed there for the first six weeks of this year before starting to show signs of improvement three weeks ago.

The index has averaged –11 since the start of the year, slightly below its 16-year average of -8 but still much higher than its worst year, 1992, when it averaged –44. The index averaged +4 in 2001, down from a record +29 in 2000 – the largest year-to-year drop in this poll’s history.

	ABC/Money Index	
Today	- 5	
Last week	- 7	
Four weeks ago	-13	
2002 average	-11	
2001 average	+4	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high

Feb. 9, 1992                      -50    Record low  
 Average since 12/85                -8

**GROUPS** – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off Americans. The index is +23 in higher-income households compared to -47 in the lowest, +5 among college graduates while -37 among high-school dropouts, +2 among whites but -43 among blacks and +6 among men while -15 among women.



Here's a closer look at the three components of the ABC/Money index:

**NATIONAL ECONOMY** – Forty percent of Americans rate the nation's economy as excellent or good, up three points from last week. The best was 80 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	40	2	38	60	47	13
Avg. since 12/85	42	4	38	58	39	19

**PERSONAL FINANCES** – Sixty-one percent rate their own finances as excellent or good, up one point from last week. The best was 70 percent, set Aug. 30, 1998 and last matched in January 2000. The worst rating was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	61	6	55	39	27	12
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	53	43	30	12

**BUYING CLIMATE** – Forty-two percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things they want and need, unchanged from last week. The best was 57 percent Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 20 percent in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	42	5	37	58	42	16
Avg. since 12/85	39	3	36	61	41	21

**METHODOLOGY** - The ABC News/Money magazine Consumer Comfort Index represents a rolling average based on telephone interviews with about 1,000 adults nationwide each month. This week's results are based on 1,022 interviews in the month ending March 10, 2002 and have an error margin of plus or minus three percentage points. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

The ABC/Money index is derived as follows: The negative response to each index question is subtracted from the positive response to that question. The three resulting numbers are then added and divided by three. The index can range from +100 (everyone positive on all three measures) to -100 (all negative on all three measures). The survey began in December 1985.

Analysis by Daniel Merkle.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet, at:

<http://abcnews.go.com/sections/politics/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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03/10/02	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
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Group	-----							
GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	-5	-7	-13	-3	10	10	-13	-1
State of Economy	-20	-26	-36	-26	12	12	-38	-12
Personal Finances	22	20	18	24	30	32	12	24
Buying Climate	-16	-16	-20	-6	-11	-4	-24	-16
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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	6	3	-5	6	14	14	-6	5
Women	-15	-17	-19	-11	6	6	-21	-7
Age:								
18 - 34	-6	-2	-1	4	11	21	-8	5
35 - 44	-12	-15	-14	-8	14	14	-16	-2
45 - 54	4	0	-22	-6	19	19	-22	-4
55 - 64	-3	-16	-10	5	-8	14	-30	-4
65 +	-6	-14	-22	-13	2	9	-22	-7
Income:								
Under \$15K	-47	-51	-49	-45	-34	-22	-54	-39
\$15K To \$24.9K	-23	-26	-32	-23	-16	-14	-40	-25
\$25K To \$39.9K	-10	-1	-17	-1	8	11	-24	-8
\$40K To \$49.9K	11	7	-7	7	12	21	-14	4
Over \$50K	23	14	9	16	41	41	3	24
Region:								
Northeast	-5	-6	-8	-5	19	19	-17	-3
Midwest	-8	-14	-14	-2	5	13	-15	1
South	1	-4	-13	-5	6	8	-13	-1
West	-11	-6	-12	2	13	17	-21	-2
Race:								
White	2	-2	-7	0	17	17	-8	4
Black	-43	-47	-41	-29	-35	-8	-47	-30
Politics:								

Republican	16	7	5	16	29	34	5	20
Democrat	-18	-16	-24	-12	-4	2	-29	-12
Independent	-4	-7	-9	-10	7	7	-19	-5
Education:								
< High School	-37	-36	-37	-16	-26	-15	-49	-32
High Sch. Grad.	-3	-4	-10	-10	2	6	-18	-7
College +	5	0	-5	5	26	26	-5	12
Home:								
Own	4	-1	-10	2	14	16	-10	4
Rent	-23	-21	-16	-16	-1	-1	-27	-15
Marital Status:								
Single	-14	-12	-6	0	-2	15	-19	-1
Married	3	0	-4	2	20	20	-7	5
Sep/Wid/Div	-31	-34	-40	-24	-23	-10	-42	-25
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	4	1	-3	6	19	19	-4	8
Part-Time	4	3	-1	-4	8	11	-15	-3
Not Employed	-19	-21	-26	-15	-4	-1	-28	-13

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